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NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO.

TO: The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Secretary of the Treasury
The Attorney General
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Director, U. S. Information Agency
The Administrator, National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
Administrator, Federal Aviation Agency
Administrator of General Services
Director, Bureau of the Budget
Director, Office of Emergency Planning
Director, Office of Science and Technology
Director of Telecommunications Management

NOV. 23, 1962
(Revised as of
DEC. 20, 1962)
(Revised as of
JAN. 8, 1963)

SUBJECT: Establishment of the National Communications System

Concept and objectives

After considering the recommendations of the report, dated
of the Subcommittee on Communications of the Executive Committee of the
National Security Council, established by NSAM 201, dated October 26, 1962, I
have made the following decisions.

A National Communications System (NCS) shall be established and developed by
linking together, improving, and extending on an evolutionary basis the
communications facilities and components of the various Federal agencies. The
objective of the NCS will be to provide necessary communications for the
Federal Government under all conditions ranging from normal situation to
national emergencies and international crises, including nuclear attack.

The system will be developed and operated to be responsive to the variety of
needs of the national command and user agencies and be capable of meeting
priority requirements under emergency or war conditions through use of reserve

capacity and additional private facilities. The NCS will also provide the necessary combinations of hardness, mobility, and circuit redundancy to obtain survivability of essential communications in all circumstances.

Initial emphasis in developing the NCS will be on meeting the most critical needs for communications in national security programs, particularly to overseas areas. As rapidly as is consistent with meeting critical needs, other Government needs will be examined and satisfied, as warranted, in the context of the NCS. The extent and character of the benefits to be obtained, and the costs involved.

new { Although no complete definition of the NCS can be made in advance of design studies and evolution in practice, it is generally conceived that the NCS would be comprised primarily of the long haul, point-to-point, trunk communications which can serve one or more agencies.

Set forth below are the general organizational arrangements to assist the President in exercising his communication responsibilities and to govern the establishment and effective operation of the NCS. These include the Special Assistant to the President for Telecommunications in the Executive Office of the President, the Secretary of Defense as Executive Agent for the NCS, the Administrator of General Services with respect to the Federal Telecommunications System, and agencies using the NCS. These arrangements supersede those set forth in NSAM 201.

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Executive Office responsibilities

Subject to the authority and control of the President, responsibility for policy direction of the development and operation of a National Communications System is placed in the Director of Telecommunications Management who in this capacity shall also serve as a Special Assistant to the President for Telecommunications. In carrying out this responsibility, he shall:

- a. Advise the President on the communication requirements and responsibilities of the users of the national system; on the guidance to be given to the Executive Agent with respect to the design and operation of the NCS; and on the adequacy of system designs developed by the Executive Agent to provide, on a priority basis and under varying conditions of emergency, communications to the users of the NCS.
- b. In consultation with the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs and the Director of the Office of Emergency Planning, develop for the President's approval those requirements unique to the needs of the President.
- c. Formulate and issue to the Executive Agent guidance as to the relative priorities of requirements.
- d. Exercise review and surveillance of actions to insure compliance with policy determinations and guidance.
- e. Ensure that there is adequate planning to meet future needs of the NCS.

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In performing these functions, the Special Assistant to the President for Telecommunications will work closely with the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; he will consult with the Director of the Office of Science and Technology, and the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, as appropriate; will establish arrangements for inter-agency consultation to ensure that the NCS will meet the essential needs of all Government agencies; and will be responsible for carrying on the work of the Subcommittee on Communications of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council. In addition to staff regularly assigned, he is authorized to arrange for the assignment of communications and other specialists from any agency by detail or temporary assignment.

The Bureau of the Budget, in consultation with the Special Assistant to the President for Telecommunications, the Executive Agent and the Administrator of General Services, will prescribe general guidelines and procedures for financing the NCS and for preparation of budget estimates by the participating agencies.

Executive Agent responsibilities

To obtain the benefits of unified technical planning and operations, a single Executive Agent for the NCS is necessary. The Secretary of Defense is hereby designated to serve in this capacity. He shall:

- a. Design, for the approval of the President, the NCS, taking into consideration the communication needs and resources of all Federal agencies.

- b. Develop plans for fulfilling approved requirements and priority determinations, and recommend assignments of implementation responsibilities by user agencies.
- c. Assist the user agencies and the General Services Administrator with respect to the Federal Telecommunications System to accomplish their respective undertakings in the development and operation of the system.
- d. Allocate, reallocate, and arrange for restoral of communications facilities to authorized users based on approved requirements and priorities.
- e. Develop operational plans and provide operational guidance with respect to all elements of the NCS, including (1) the prescription of standards and practices as to operation, maintenance, and installation; (2) the maintenance of necessary records to ensure effective utilization of the NCS; (3) the request of assignment of radio frequencies for the NCS; (4) the monitoring of frequency utilization; and (5) the exercise and test of system effectiveness.
- f. Within general policy guidance, carry on long range planning to ensure the NCS meets future Government needs, especially in the national security area, and conduct and coordinate research and development in support of the NCS to ensure that the NCS reflects advancements in the art of communications.

new { Within the framework of the NCS, the executive agent will provide for the requirements for survivable communications of the President and civilian agencies. A statement of such requirements is set forth in the report of the Task Group on Survivable Communications Requirements of the President and Top Civil Leaders, dated August 20, 1962, which is approved for planning purposes.

The Secretary of Defense may delegate these functions within the Department of Defense subject at all times to his direction, authority, and control. In carrying out his responsibilities for design, development and operation of the NCS, the Secretary will make appropriate arrangements for participation of staff of other agencies.

new Responsibilities of the Administrator of General Services

The Federal Telecommunications System, established by direction of the President under authority of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended, to provide communications services to certain agencies in the Fifty States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, shall be a part of the NCS and shall be implemented and developed in accordance with approved plans and policies developed pursuant to this memorandum. The Executive Agent and the Administrator of General Services shall be responsible for establishing arrangements to avoid duplication in requests for cost, traffic, and other information needed from agencies served by the FTS.

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Nothing contained herein shall affect the responsibilities of the Administrator of General Services under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended, with respect to the representation of agencies in negotiations with carriers and in proceedings before Federal and state regulatory bodies; prescription of policies and methods of procurement; and the procurement either directly or by delegation of authority to other agencies of public utility communications services.

Responsibilities of other agencies

All agencies are directed to cooperate with and assist the Special Assistant to the President for Telecommunications, the Executive Agent, and the Administrator of General Services in the performance of the functions set forth above.

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